Outline

- Background information
- Plot / Character overview
- Motif
  - Group Therapy
  - Violence & Sex
- Theme
  - Anti-consumerism
  - Identity crisis
  - Existential crisis
- Easter eggs and conclusion
Background Information

➢ Director
➢ Film Technique
➢ Genre
➢ Novel
➢ Thesis Statement
David Fincher

Style - Known for directing psychological thrillers
Career - Visual effects producer
  - Director: Commercials, music videos, and movies

Fight Club -
  disappointment at the box-office in the beginning,
  but later rated NO.1 for its DVD

Cult film: a film with a cult following, obscure or unpopular with mainstream audiences, and often revolutionary or ironically enjoyed (Dirks, 2013).
Film Technique

• Transitions between scenes
• Camera angles
• Three dimensional filming
• Use of montage
Film Technique: Transitions between Scenes

➢ Begins with the ending > confusing
➢ Flashback corresponds to the ending > unified
➢ Brain and nerve impulses > Narrator’s thoughts and fear
Film Technique: Camera Angle

➢ Fight scene > audience as angelface
Film Technique: Three dimensional filming technique

➢ composed of 100 photos
➢ inform space structures
Film Technique: Montage

➢ Definition: A film editing technique that combines the fragments of images or shots into a piece of work.
➢ created with thousands of images
Genre

➢ Psychological Thriller: Mental states of characters, including perceptions, thoughts, distortions, struggles to grasp reality (Packer, 2007).

➢ Characters battle their two minds

➢ Complex > second view is required
Novel

➢ **Fight Club (1996) by Chuck Palahniuk**
Experience of a protagonist suffering from insomnia

➢ **Differences:**

  Two new rules of the fight club:
  1. Nobody is the center of the fight club except for the two men fighting.
  2. Fight club will always be free

  **Ending :)**
Thesis Statement

Group therapy, violence and sex as motifs are presented in Fight Club (1999), which showcase the concept of anti-consumerism, identity and existential crisis through the narrator’s journey from support groups to fight club.
Overview

➢ Plot
➢ Character Review
Plot

➢ The unnamed narrator hopes to find ways to deal with his insomnia.
➢ He is bothered by Marla Singer, and they negotiate to avoid attending the same group.
➢ On a flight, the narrator meets Tyler Durdan. Because of the bombing of his condo, he joins Tyler, and they start the "Fight club"
➢ As the fight clubs expand across the country under Tyler's leadership, they become the organization called "Project Mayhem."
➢ The car crash scene: The narrator lets go( The narrator and Tyler, two personalities become one)
➢ The narrator later realizes that Tyler and himself are actually the same person.
➢ The movie ends with the narrator and Marla, holding hands, watching the explosives detonates.
Character

The narrator ("Jack")

Tyler Durdan (Personality)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Narrator</th>
<th>Tyler Durdan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neurotic, high-strung, cooperate</td>
<td>Free-spirit, devious, anarchistic, violent, and funny</td>
</tr>
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</table>
| Believes that capitalism has forced people to pursue false goals  
“Working in jobs [we] hate, just [we] can buy what [we] don’t really need.” | Aims to destroy the civilization, and create a new one.  
“It’s only after we’ve lost everything, that we are free to do anything.”  
(Arcadian paradise) |
| Cries to reveal his feelings | Work out feelings by smashing things, preferably each other |
| Wants to be enlightened | Wants to destroy the narrator’s empty, societally-programmed self, but failed. |
The narrator = Tyler Durdan

➢ Day job VS night job
➢ One with name and one does not
➢ Tyler and Marla having sex when the police calls
➢ Tyler asks not to talk about him in front of Marla
➢ When the two get on the bus, only one fare is charged
➢ The narrator calls Tyler in a phone booth, and the phone rings back.
➢ The car crash scene.
Marla Singer

➢ Goes to supporting group to see people dealing with death

➢ Feels guilty of not dying

➢ Face her own lies

“\textit{I embrace my own festering diseased corruption.}”
Character

Robert Paulson (Bob)

➢ Sacrifice twice

Sacrifice name

Sacrifice life

➢ Bridge the gap between

Masculine & Feminine
Motif: Group Therapy

➢ Support Group
➢ Fight Club
Group Therapy

- A form of psychotherapy
- Involves one or more therapists working with several people at the same time
- Common in Europe, United Kingdom, United States
Support Group

- Everything starts with the narrator going to support group
Why the narrator goes to support group?

- Suffering from insomnia.
Why the narrator goes to support group?

- Doctor can’t help.

No, you can’t die from insomnia.
Why the narrator goes to support group?

- Doctor’s suggestion.

See the guys with testicular cancer.
Why the narrator goes to support group?

- He feels relieved.
Fight Club

- A form of group therapy (to the narrator)
- Reason for why the narrator needs support group

- Reason for why the narrator needs the Fight Club

To release and vent his emotions
Where can we tell Fight Club functions as a support group?

Narrator: Afterwards, we all felt saved.
Where can we tell Fight Club functions as a support group?
Why members of Fight Club are totally submissive to Mr. Durden (the narrator)?

- First possible reason: brainwash
Why members of Fight Club are totally submissive to Mr. Durden (the narrator)?

- Second possible reason: members see his determination.
Motif: Violence

- Tyler to the Narrator
- Fight Club
- Project Mayhem
- The Narrator to Marla
Tyler to The Narrator

“I want you to hit me as hard as you can.” “I don’t want to die without any scar.”
Fight Club

“Self-destruction.”
Project Mayhem

Did You Know?

YOU CAN USE OLD MOTOR OIL TO FERTILIZE YOUR LAWN

Environmental Protection Agency
The Narrator to Marla
Motif: Sex

➢ Bob
➢ Fight Club
➢ Marla
Marla
Anti-Consumerism

“We buy things we don’t need with money we don’t have to impress people we don’t like.”
**From Consumerism to Anti-Consumerism**

**Rise of consumerism**
1. Advertising: brainwashing of the masses (e.g. IKEA, brand names)
2. Reduction of human value to monetary contribution

**Loss of individual identity**
AND

**Loss of independence** (control over one’s own actions)

**Anti-Corporate Industry Anti-Consumerism Movement**

1. Dissatisfaction with status-quo
2. Desire to regain autonomy and freedom from corporate control
3. Rebellion against corporate entities
“With insomnia, nothing's real. Everything’s far away. Everything’s a copy of a copy of a copy.”

“When deep space exploration ramps up, it will be corporations that name everything: The IBM Stellar Sphere. The Philip Morris Galaxy. Planet Starbucks.”
"I'd flip through catalogues and wonder - what kind of dining set defines me as a person?"

"Advertising has us chasing cars and clothes, working jobs we hate so we can buy shit we don't need."
“Single-Serving” Life

“The people I meet on each flight - they’re single-serving friends.”

“I was a recall coordinator. My job was to apply the formula.”
"I had everything in that suitcase - shirts, my DKNY shoes, my AX ties. Never mind."

The things you own end up owning you.

There's nothing up there.
**Excess and Waste**

“It was beautiful. We were selling rich women their own fat asses back to them.”
Project Mayhem

*mayhem* (n.) - a situation in which there is little or no order or control (Cambridge Dictionary)

➢ **Ringleader:** Tyler Durden

➢ **Members:** “space monkeys”

➢ **M.O.:** organized crime w. code of conduct

➢ **Purpose:** Undermine corporate America through escalating levels of vandalism, destruction, etc.

➢ **Fight Club** as the vehicle for spread of anti-consumerist ideas

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Individual 
“homework assignment”

Growth of cult-like organization, or an army

Impact/change society
Code of Conduct: Silence

“The first rule of Fight Club is: You do not talk about Fight Club. The second rule of Fight Club is: You do not talk about Fight Club. Third rule of Fight Club…”

“The first rule of Project Mayhem is you do not ask questions.”
Homework | Rejection of Authority

Messing around
➢ Provoke reaction

Undermining authority
➢ Establishing new order
Elaborate Pranks: Vandalism, Arson, etc.

“You’re not the care you drive. You’re not the contents of your wallet. You’re not your f*ckin’ khakis. You’re the all-singing, all-dancing crap of the world.”
Organized Crime

Power in the aggregate
Working Class Movement

“The people you're after are everyone you depend on. We're the people who do your laundry and cook your food and serve your dinner. **We guard you while you sleep.**”
War Against Credit Card Companies
Identity Crisis
Definition

◆ An identity crisis is a time of intensive analysis and exploration of different ways of looking at oneself. (Erickson, 1970)

◆ Failure of developing a strong sense of identity may result in negative behaviors.
• First identity crisis
  1)--causes: postmodern lifestyle
  2)--reaction: acquisition of IKEA furniture
     attending different support groups
• Second identity crisis
  1)--causes: encountering Marla
  2)--reaction: establishing fight club
  3.Third identity crisis
  1)--causes: Bob’s death
  2)--reaction: destroying another personality
The first identity crisis

You wake up at SeaTac.

The people I meet on each flight.
Causes-postmodern lifestyle

Causes-Postmodern Lifestyle:

- Confusion of Time and space
- Losing the sense of belongs to a settled environment
- Unable to build connection with others
- Single serving life
- A chain of the industry
- Low personal value
Reaction—Going to support group

Following the doctor’s advice to see “real pain”

Finding support
Reaction-Acquiring furniture

Buying furniture

Defining himself through the furniture

Constructing homelike and cozy condo

1. “slave to IKEA’s nesting instinct”
Second cause-challenged by females
Challenged by females-absence of fathers

Absence of father

Testicular cancer-removal of masculinity

“A generation of men raised by women. I'm wondering if another woman is the answer we really need.”
Challenged by female-Marla Singer

“Her life reflected my life”
Setting Up Fight Club
Reaction
Developing a new personality
The **Third Identity Crisis**

Bob’s death

Deprived personal identity in *Project Mayhem*
Fighting with Tyler in the parking lot can be seen as the narrator's reaction to the second identity crisis. He regains his authority by “killing” Tyler.
Existential Crisis
Definition

The concept of an existential crisis derived from Erikson’s (1970) identity crisis (Andrews 104). An existential crisis is a moment at which an individual questions the very foundations of their life: whether this life has any meaning, purpose, or value (James).

Focusing on “meaning, purpose and value of life.”
Causes of Existential Crisis

The concept of an existential crisis mainly exists in a modern society (Jameson & Hardt, 2000). Constrained by consumerism.
Cause of *Existential* Crisis

➢ Loss of close relationship with others

➢ Distance between individuals
do just about anything to avoid a fight.
Desire of **Being Heard**

Instead of just waiting for their turn to speak.
Solutions for Existential Crisis

➢ Pretending another person who is seemingly to be more “desperate”

➢ Crying

➢ Attending the support groups

Failed
Solutions for Existential Crisis

➢ “Stay with the pain.”

➢ As a reminder of existence

➢ Scars

➢ Fight Club
I don’t wanna die without any scars.
Solutions for Existential Crisis

➢ Finding the sense of existence in a team.

➢ Project Mayhem
Had I slept?
Advantage of Existential Crisis

Existential theorists view crisis as an opening of possibilities. No matter how seriously one is affected, the situation will always contain both pain and possibility (Andrews 104).

Tyler’s philosophy: Devastation precedes reconstruction.
that we’re free to do anything.
Easter Egg
Easter Egg

➢ Movie theater projectionist
➢ Tyler’s appearance
Easter Egg

4:07: Tyler at copier
Easter Egg

6:19: Tyler in the background
Easter Egg

7:34: Tyler’s appearance beside Mr. Douglas
Easter Egg

12:37: Tyler on the lower right corner
Easter Egg

20:20: Tyler in an ad
WHY?

➢ Fooling audience’s subconscious

➢ Split personality:
  third party audience → character
Easter Egg: DVD

WARNING

If you are reading this, then this warning is for you. Every word you read of this useless fine print is another second off your life. Don't you have other things to do? Is your life so empty that you honestly can't think of a better way to spend these moments? Or are you so impressed with authority that you give respect and credence to all who claim it? Do you read everything you're supposed to read? Do you think everything you're supposed to think? Buy what you're told you should want? Get out of your apartment. Meet a member of the opposite sex. Stop the excessive shopping and masturbation. Quit your job. Start a fight. Prove you're alive. If you don't claim your humanity you will become a statistic. You have been warned...... Tyler
Conclusion

❖ Fight Club manages to include a bit reality with fantasy.

Anti-consumerism: the working class revolt against corporate industry
Identity crisis: failure to develop strong personal identity
Existential crisis: loss of meanings of life
Film↔The audience
Easter Egg

Ending: Tyler and his c****
Works Cited


Discussion Questions

1. What is the relationship between Marla and the narrator/Tyler? How does she influence him?

2. What are the scenes in the film that show the flow of human lives and actions in cycles? Please explain in details.

3. How do you interpret the ending? It is realistic?

4. Do you think the narrator successfully rids himself of his alter identity, or does Tyler live on?

5. Why do the space monkeys obey Tyler? What are their motivations and purposes?